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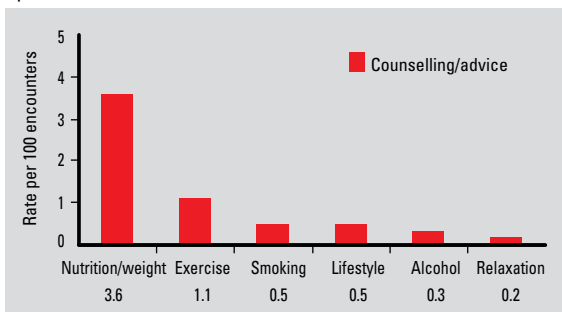
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Lifestyle matters

General practice is commonly identified as a significant intervention point for health care and health promotion. The BEACH program (Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health) gathers information on Australian general practice activity, including the provision of advice and counselling about 'lifestyle' issues.

Figure 1. Rate of lifestyle advice/counselling provided per 100 encounters



■ In 2005–2006 there were 101 993 patient encounters recorded in BEACH by 1017 general practitioners. At least one lifestyle advice/counselling was provided at 5.3 per 100 encounters. Advice/counselling about nutrition/weight was the most common followed by exercise (Figure 1).

Lipid disorders and hypertension were the problems accounting for the largest proportions of lifestyle advice/counselling. The problems with the highest proportion of lifestyle advice/counselling given were tobacco abuse (given for 70% of tobacco abuse problems managed), overweight (64%), obesity (60%) and alcohol abuse (53%) (Table 1).

Conflict of interest: none declared.

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Table 1. Most common problems managed with lifestyle counselling

Problem managed	Number	Percent problems with lifestyle counselling	Rate per 100 encounters ^(a) (n=101 993)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Percent of this problem ^(b)
Lipid disorders*	662	12.2	0.7	0.6	0.7	19.0
Hypertension*	559	10.3	0.6	0.4	0.7	5.8
Diabetes*	417	7.7	0.4	0.3	0.5	11.5
Obesity (BMI ≥30)	352	6.5	0.3	0.3	0.4	60.4
Tobacco abuse	231	4.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	69.7
Gastroenteritis*	220	4.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	13.9
Overweight (BMI ≥25 and <30)	159	2.9	0.2	0.1	0.2	63.8
Oesophageal disease	142	2.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	5.9
Acute stress reaction	140	2.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	28.0
Chronic alcohol abuse	117	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	52.9
Subtotal	3223	59.4	–	–	–	–
Total problems	5429	100.0	5.3	4.8	5.8	–

a) Rate of provision of lifestyle counselling for selected problem per 100 total encounters

b) Percent of contacts with this problem that generated at least one lifestyle counselling

* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes

LCL = lower confidence limit, UCL = upper confidence limit